

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 2, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
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- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
- Summary of State Resources Committed.

Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell. The weather forecasts project a continuing of the high pressure systems through August and possible into September.

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stageI.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stageII.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in effect for specific areas:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. *(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)*

The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

Mile Marker 124 is located 3 miles east of Clinton. The fire is 5,720 acres with 15% containment. Angell's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 300. Structures are threatened. Cause: Under investigation. Traffic restrictions on Interstate 90. Three major power lines have been impacted by the fire. Cell towers and a aircraft navigational beacon have had their powerlines disrupted. Evacuations are in effect in Cramer Creek.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest, in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Bennett's and Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's, transitioning today, are managing this fire as a branch under the Ahorn fire. Tomorrow the Meriwether Fire will be managed as a separate incident by Oltrogge's Team. Current size is estimated at 31,225 acres with 10% containment. Personnel Assigned: 206. Cause: Lightning. Evacuations are in effect. Structures remain threatened in Eldorado subdivision, Holter Lake and Beaver Creek. An emergency closure is in place that encompasses the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness Area as well as Coulter Campground along the Missouri River. A River Closure is in place for Upper Holter Reservoir from American Bar Gulch extending north to Beartooth Landing.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. LaFave's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Fire is estimated at 19,448 acres with 5% containment. Personnel assigned: 608. Structures are threatened. Evacuations are occurring. Cause: Lightning. Significant spotting contributed to rates of spread and strong winds increased fire spread intensity. Fire has burned onto the Blackfeet Reservation near Dog Gun Lake.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County being managed by Bennett's Type 1 Team (Whitney's Type 1 Team has been ordered).

Current size is estimated at 39,220 acres. 2% Containment. Personnel Assigned: 379. Structures threatened and more evacuations are anticipated. Cause: Lightning. Lewis & Clark and Teton County are prepared to evacuate people on the Beaver Willow Road.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of 4,460 acres with 0% containment and consists of the Sawmill Creek (860 acres), the Wyman #2 (2,200 acres), and the Fisher Point (1,400 acres). Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 230. Cause: Lightning. All fires are expected to grow by 10% today. Burning in timber with individual tree torching and backing fire. Structures threatened.

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Raley's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is 4,086 acres. Personnel assigned: NR. Cause: Under Investigation. Structures are threatened. Burning in timber and under story. Extreme fire behavior with crowning and running.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 4,625 acres with 0% containment. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 150. Cause: Lightning. Observed fire behavior; group torching, active crowning, and long range spotting. Road and recreation site closures. Flathead Co. SO is prepared for possible evacuation of Star Meadows.

Rombo Mountain WFU, Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is being mobilized. Estimated size is 550 acres. Personnel assigned: 18. Burning in timber and under story. Crown fires with long-range (1/4 to 1/2 mile) spotting.

Owl on Yellowstone NP and Gallatin NF. Wilder's IMT2. The Owl Fire is 2,800 acres. 60% contained. Wilder's Type 2 IMT is in command. Personnel assigned: 408. Cause: Lightning.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County is now 21,888 acres. Personnel assigned: 75. Cause: Lightning. **The Fool Creek Fire was declared a wildland fire this morning at 0001 hours.** Reinartz's Fire Use Management Team. Structures are threatened. Evacuations are in place. Resources will implement and test structure protection equipment at Massey Tract and the Teton Pass Ski Area. Further structure protection equipment will be installed and tested at the Seven Lazy P Ranch.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 4,295 acres and 15% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 55. Cause: Lightning. Fire became active on NW and NE perimeter with short range spotting, single and group tree torching.

Garceau on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Kechter's Type 2 IMT. 3,045 acres and 90% contained. Personnel assigned: 354. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. Structures threatened. Weather moderated yesterday which kept the fire within containment lines.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 4,000 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 Incident Organization. Structures are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 14. Cause: Lightning. Minimal growth yesterday.

Porcupine is located in the Gallatin National Forest, approximately 31 miles north of Livingston. Size is 124 acres at 20 percent contained. Personnel assigned: 17. The fire is torching and smoldering (with pockets of timber burning out).

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size)

Valley Drive, 8 miles northeast of Miles City. The Valley Drive fire burned 399 acres and was suppressed in extended attack and is 100% contained. DNRC assisted Custer County on this fire with 4 SEATS (Single Engine Air Tankers), a helicopter, an air attack, a strike team (5) of engines, plus engines from Carter and Rosebud Counties.

For more information on Montana Fires: <http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>.

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

Today the NWS has issued no Red Flag Warnings or Fire Watches at this time.

A hazardous weather forecast has been issued for smoke.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

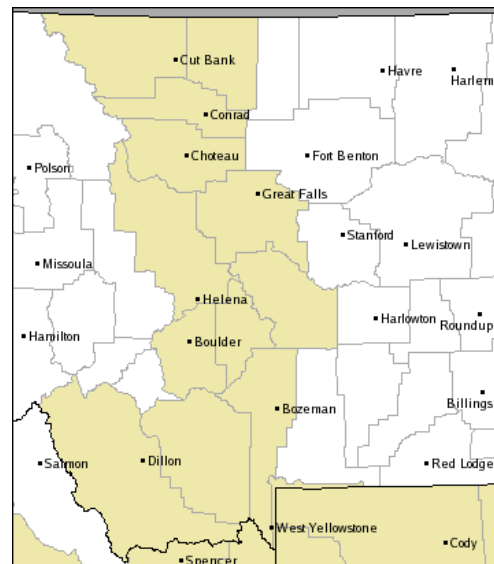
A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

<http://www.weather.gov/>

Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.



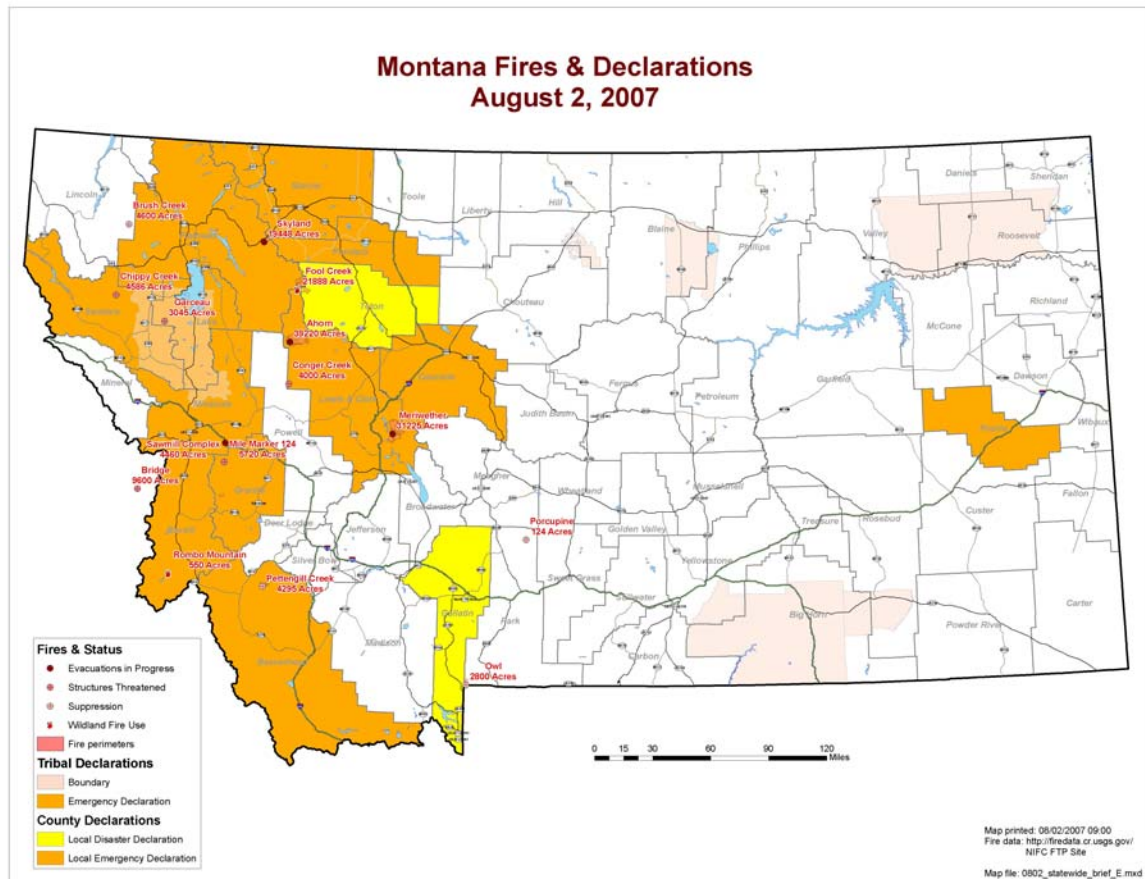
fire

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
 Ravalli
 Lake
 Granite
 Cascade
 Missoula
 Beaverhead

Sanders
 Glacier
 Pondera
 Flathead
 Prairie
 Blackfoot Nation

- Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton

Gallatin

VI. Local Government Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (8/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 30, 2007.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES also has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its nine-person module are stationed in Helena.
- A second Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and module is deployed for initial attack. This Blackhawk and its nine-person module are stationed in Missoula.
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Bennett's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Ahorn and Meriwether fires. The Chinook and its nine-person module are stationed in Helena.
- A Montana Army National Guard Security Team (26 personnel) has been assigned to the Mile Marker 124 Fire.
- A second Montana Army National Guard Security Team (26 personnel) has been ordered for the Meriwether Fire and were deployed on 8/01/07.
- A third Montana Army National Guard Security Team (26 personnel) has been ordered for the Sawmill Complex and will be deployed today.
- A third Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and module has been ordered to support initial attack efforts at the Northwest Land Office. This Blackhawk and its nine-person module will report to the Northwest Land Office (in Kalispell) on 8/2/07.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was activated and staffed to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900). We remain at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.